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REFUTATION

OF THE

False Principles

Assumed and Apply'd by the REVEREND

Mr. JOSEPH PRKE,

In his Book, Intituled,

An Impartial View of the Principal Difficulties that effect the Trinitarian, or clog the Arian Scheme, &c.

To which is added,

Some short REMARKS on Sir Richard Blackmore's Just Prejudices against the *Arian* Hypothesis.

WITH A

POSTSCRIPT

CONCERNING

The real Agreement between the *Athanasians* and *Socinians* in the *Trinitarian* Controversy.

In a LETTER to a Friend.

By THOMAS MORGAN.

L O N D O N :

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REPUTATION

OF THE



MEJORADA

THE HISTORY OF THE
BRITISH MUSEUM
FROM ITS FOUNDATION
TO THE PRESENT TIME
BY
J. B. BURTON

IN TWO VOLUMES
THE FIRST VOLUME
CONTAINING THE HISTORY
OF THE MUSEUM
FROM ITS FOUNDATION
TO THE PRESENT TIME
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POSTSCRIPT

THE SECOND VOLUME
CONTAINING THE HISTORY
OF THE MUSEUM
FROM ITS FOUNDATION
TO THE PRESENT TIME
BY
J. B. BURTON

IN A LETTER TO THE
HONORABLE THE SECRETARY
OF STATE

BY
J. B. BURTON

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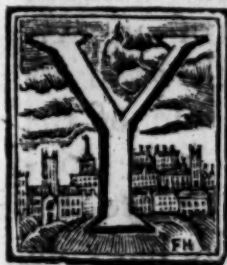


A
REFUTATION
OF THE
False Principles

Assum'd and Apply'd by the Rev.

Mr. JOSEPH PYKE, &c.

Reverend and Dear Sir,



YOU desire to know my opinion of Mr. Pyke's Performance, as to which, I have endeavoured to give you some satisfaction in the following Remarks. I have not accompanied him thro' all his declamatory Harangues, for I have neither time

nor patience to attend a preaching Disputant, while he is only appealing from Mens Understanding to their Passions. I have therefore contented myself with only shewing the Weakness, Absurdity and Self-contradiction of his main Principles, and the Foundation being removed, I leave the Superstructure to take its own fate. Our Author having made a Bow or two to Charity and Moderation, and paid a few compliments to the Mildness, the Tenderness, the Meekness and Humility of the Gospel, presently throws off the Disguise, and appears in his own Person, sparing no Argument in his Rage, of what Force or Energy soever, nor regarding the strongest Contradiction that stands before him. This Gentleman finding it for his Purpose, and having resolv'd with himself to write in the Defence of what, as he owns, he does not understand; it must be allow'd that he has hit upon the only proper Method of doing it, I mean by strong Assertions, moving Harangues, Distinctions without Difference, and a thick Cloud of unintelligible Terms. For I shall shew in its proper place, that he makes use of the principal Words upon which this Controversy turns, such as Substance, Essence, Person, Nature, and the like; either without any Sense or Meaning at all,

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or else with a Sense alter'd and vary'd according to the Exigence of the Case, and the Distress he is under. Perhaps this Writer will think that I, above all Men, ought to have spar'd him, because the only Concession he makes in his whole Book is to me: he grants, because he could not well help it, (tho' yet what might he not have help'd?) that the four Ministers had not that strict and proper, or demonstrative Certainty, which I argu'd against, and he allows that Matters of Faith are incapable of it. But then he thinks it was very hard and unreasonable in me to understand them so, and endeavour to fix a Sense upon them, which I could not well suppose to be their real Meaning. That they had no strict demonstrative Certainty of what they contended for, that Matters of Faith are in their own Nature incapable of it, and that they, the four Ministers, could not stand to it when charged, I knew very well; but still their pretending to and claiming it in Words, and insinuating such a Sense into the Minds of other People, is as visible as the Book itself, and their secret Meaning ought not to skreen them against the Charge of a contrary Sense, plainly express'd and convey'd wherever it could meet with any Disposition to receive it; and this Sense had

had been so plainly express'd, and so often inculcated in the Book, that I may venture to say, there was not one in a thousand of their own Friends but what understood them so. In consequence of which, I was for a long Time after impeach'd and condemn'd by the whole Party, for denying the most strict and absolute Certainty in Matters of Faith; and this was represented as a bold Attack upon Religion, and no less than Scepticism, Infidelity, and a Subversion of Christianity; not only the common People, but the Ministers themselves, with great Zeal and Earnestness joyning in the Cry. It was very just and proper in me therefore to shew the Absurdities and intolerable Consequences of such a Pretence, and I am perswaded, that these Gentlemen are not half so angry with their own Friends for misunderstanding their real Sense, as they are with me for undeceiving them; since it is now generally believ'd, that notwithstanding their indubitable Perswasion and invincible Confidence, they are as liable to Mistakes even in this very Matter, as other People. Mr. Pyke may call his Perswasion a rational Perswasion with all my Heart; he may pity and pray for others, and bless himself in the glorious Conceit of his Orthodoxy, as he pleases; however, I doubt not but to make it appear, that

that his rational Perswasion is not only above, but contrary to Reason.

The Author in his Introduction, p. 6. lays down (as I understand him) *An uncontested Principle*, he tells us that it is rational to suppose, that God may reveal some things, the Nature, Reasons, Circumstances, and Modes of which can't be brought down to the Level of our weak Understandings. I suppose he means, that a Thing in itself may be reveal'd, as to its Truth and Existence, tho' the Manner, Reasons, and other Circumstances of the thing are not reveal'd, and so still remain as to us Incomprehensible. This doubtless, is all that he can mean by it; for should he say, that the Modes, Reasons, &c. are reveal'd or made known to us; and yet that they remain still Incomprehensible or unknown, notwithstanding the Revelation, it would be a Contradiction in Terms. A thing in itself, as to its Truth and Existence in general, may be certainly revealed, and made clear and intelligible enough, where the unreveal'd Manner and other Circumstances of the Thing may remain still unknown and incomprehensible; in which Case, we ought to receive and believe the Thing so far as it is revealed, and content ourselves with being ignorant in other Matters, where God has not thought fit to inform us; and who ever doubted

doubted of this, or once deny'd it? And therefore the Author's going about to prove it, and urging it upon his Friend, as a Matter of great Consequence, and as if it was what his Adversaries would not grant, is a little extraordinary, and a signal Instance of his Christian Tenderness, Moderation and Charity. If this Author cannot find a Man, who owning a Thing to be reveal'd from God, will yet withhold his Assent, because he cannot understand the Reason or Manner of the Thing, let him bear the Imputation which he now lays upon his Adversaries without the least Appearance, I will not say of *Christian Charity*, but even of *Pagan Justice*; let him prove the thing that there are three distinct Intelligent Agents in the one God, and we shall receive it; but he knows very well that 'tis the *Thing itself*, and not the Manner of the Thing, that he and his Masters affirm, and we deny to be a Matter of Divine Revelation, and tho' he pretends to throw off all his Ignorance and Inconsistency upon the unreveal'd and unknown Causes, Reasons and Modes of things, yet I doubt not but to make it evident, that his Ignorance lies in his having no Notion of the very Thing that he writes about, and using his own Words without Ideas.

As preparatory to what follows, it may be proper here to observe to you, that there is one general Contradiction which is inclusive of all particular Contradictions, and to which they are all reducible, *viz.* that the same thing, at the same time, may be, and not be; or that the same Proposition may be true and false at the same time. This being the primary fundamental Contradiction of all, whoever can get off with it, will never boggle at any other; but you may, to as good purpose fling Dust in the Air, as stare him in the Face with Contradictions: Now this Sum and Substance of all Absurdity and Impossibility, our Author, and others of his cast, by the help of a mere verbal Distinction always assume as their first Principle, which they employ as the great Engine, whereby to remove all other Difficulties, and deliver themselves from the uneasy weight, whenever they happen to be taken, as they frequently are, in affirming and denying the same thing. Their Principle is this, that the same thing may be, or not be, or the same Proposition, at the same time, may be true and false; not indeed in the same, but in *different Respects*; now if you grant them this Principle, it will be impossible ever to fasten a Contradiction upon them; because it will follow from the Principle itself, that there can be no such

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thing in nature as a Contradiction, but that every thing is equally true and false. I shall shew therefore, that this Distinction of the same and different respects, as thus apply'd, is merely verbal, and that it is impossible, that the same thing at the same time, should be true and false in any sense at all, either in the same, or in different Respects. 'Tis evident, that whatever is affirmed, or deny'd in any one particular determinate Sense, must necessarily, in that determinate Sense, be either true or false, and cannot be both, or neither, because in a particular determinate sense there can be no variety, and there is no Medium or state of indifferency betwixt Truth and Falsehood. 'Tis evident also, that the thing affirmed or deny'd cannot be the *same thing* any longer than the terms of the Proposition retain the same precise determinate meaning; for where the Complex Ideas to which the terms of the Proposition are affix'd, shall be any way alter'd or varied, either by putting in some new Ideas, or leaving out any of the old, tho' the same sound may be retain'd, yet the thing itself, which is hereby affirmed or deny'd, will not be the same, but quite different things. What is therefore frequently, to serve a Turn, call'd the same thing in *different Respects*, is really two different things, one of which
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be easily true, and the other false at the same time. And this is the Mystery of different Senses and Respects, being a device of subtle Disputants, when they have a mind to shuffle upon you very different, and perhaps contradictory things, under the same sound, as one and the same thing.

And now, Sir, I shall exemplify this unfair Management throughout this whole Book of our Author; and here that I may do him all possible Justice, and leave him no reason to complain, I shall first of all consider this Mono-triple Scheme upon its own general Principles, as common to all the *Athanasians*, without any regard to the several different and inconsistent Explications given of it by their Doctors and learned men; and shew that it implies an Impossibility and Contradiction in the abstract Nature and Reason of things, and then I will apply it to the Author's own Account of the matter, and shew that, 'tis as much a Contradiction in his Scheme as in any other; that he has not, as he imagines, hit upon a Medium between *Sabellianism* and *Tritheism*; and that if he will stand to his own Principles, he must build his Hope of Salvation upon a necessary eternal Contradiction, and profess himself a *Mono-Tritheist*.

To say, that there are three things really distinct and different, so that the one is not the other, that each of these three distinct and different things are Infinite, and yet that there are not three different things which are Infinite, or three Infinites, but only one Infinite, or one thing only that is Infinite, is an express Contradiction in the nature of things. Thus also, to affirm, that there are three really distinct and different Subjects, which are each of them indued with Infinite Power, Wisdom and Intelligence; and yet that there are not three infinite Powers, Wisdoms or Intelligences, or three Infinitely, powerful, wise and intelligent Subjects, but only one such, is evidently contradictory, and impossible in the nature and reason of things. For the Distinctness and Infinity of the same specifick Attributes, must necessarily be multiplied with their distinct infinite Subjects, and the negation of this must be eternally a Contradiction, while the same precise meaning is affixed to the same terms; and silently to alter the Sense of the terms by clapping a different meaning to the same Sound, under a pretence of the same *thing* in different *Respects*, when it is really two *different things*; this, I say, is not to clear a Contradiction, but to use a bad piece of Artifice, and impose upon the Reason and Senses

ses of Mankind. Now to carry this a little farther, it is, I think, universally allow'd by all the *Athanasians*, that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are three really distinct and different Subjects, and so far distinct, that they are each of them indu'd with really distinct and incommunicable Attributes or Properties. They likewise affirm, that each of these three distinct and different Subjects is God in the strictest Sense, or God absolutely supream over all; and yet they maintain, that there is but one only Subject, that is God alone, *i. e.* they say, that there are three, who are each of them distinctly God, and yet there is but one who is God alone.

Now tho' the Contradiction here be sufficiently evident in itself, yet it will be proper to consider the general Evasion, by which they endeavour to get off with it, which is this; they say, that the three distinct Subjects of the personal Properties are united in one common subject of the Essential Properties, and so are one and the same in Substance or Essence. But here they labour to get rid of one Contradiction by running at least into half a Dozen more; for either this one common subject of the Essential Attributes, is precisely and determinately the very *self-same* with the three distinct subjects of the personal Attributes, or it is not; if they

they affirm that it is, this will be saying, that one Subject is three distinct Subjects, and three distinct Subjects but one Subject, without Distinction or Diversity; and this at the same time, and in the same sense; which, I presume, no one can be in any doubt of, whether it be a Contradiction or no. But if it be said, that the common subject of the Essential Properties, is not the self same, but a distinct Subject from the three other distinct Subjects of the personal Properties; then since also the Essential Attributes are supposed to be communicated to the three distinct Subjects of the personal Attributes, this must necessarily make four distinct Subjects, each of which is indu'd with all the Essential Attributes, that is, four distinct infinitely perfect Substances. 'Tis true, these infinite Substances will be undividedly and inseparably united to each other mutually, since it is impossible that three infinitely extended Substances should be divided or separated with respect to Space or Dimension, which, by the way, Sir, you may observe, is all that any of *Dr. Waterland's* Expressions about it will amount to; but then this does not destroy the real Existence, and numerical Distinctions of the Substances themselves. If to avoid this multiplicity of Subjects or Substances, it should be said, that the
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Subjects or Substances which sustain the personal Attributes, are not numerically distinct, but one and the same with the common Essence; as this destroys all manner of Distinction betwixt essential and personal Attributes, and supposes a Person to be only a distinct Mode of subsistence in the one common Subject or Substance, which is *Sabellianism*: so by confounding the distinct Subjects, and supposing them to be numerically one and the same, it contains an express Contradiction, and overthrows this Hypothesis upon another Principle, as I have shew'd already. And therefore turn this Scheme which way you will, it must still appear contradictory, and necessarily subvert and destroy itself. I know there is one Evasion still behind, as the last Resort of those, who in this Scheme are press'd with Contradictions, that is, when they cannot get themselves off by any possible Sense that can be put to their own Words, they fly to the Incomprehensibility of the Subject, which as they seem to think gives them a right to use Words without a meaning. And thus, at length, they stand acquitted in empty Sounds and impenetrable Darkness; for who can charge a Proposition with a Contradiction, which is own'd to be unintelligible, and without any Sense or Meaning at all?

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And now, Sir, having consider'd the impossibility and self-contradictoriness of this Hypothesis upon its general Principles, let us turn again more directly to our Author, and see how he has mended the Matter in his own particular account of it. The great difficulty in his way was to find a Medium betwixt *Sabellianism* and *Tritheism*, and to fix a certain determinate Meaning to the word Person, which might be steadily kept to, so as to answer this purpose. And this the Author thinks he has done in the following Definition, *p.* 13. here then a person is according to him ; “ A spiritual infinite
 “ intelligent Agent, which must not be
 “ consider'd as abstracted from, but as truly
 “ subsisting in the Divine Nature, and as
 “ mutually, eternally, and inseparably re-
 “ lated to the other Coessential Persons in
 “ the Godhead, from whom he is suffi-
 “ ciently and only distinguished, by some
 “ personal, and as such incommunicable
 “ Properties.

This is his Definition, which if you can understand, the rest will be all clear; and therefore I shall the more distinctly consider and examine it, because it will save me the trouble of pursuing him much farther, and let the World see, that he has been at the pains of writing a large Book, upon a Subject of great Importance, with-
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out saying one Word to the Purpose. It will likewise serve as a signal Instance of the magical Power of Sounds, and let you into the whole Mystery of scholastick Juggling. That a Person is an intelligent Agent, or an intelligent active Substance, is plain and intelligible enough ; and thus much the Author allows ; from whence one should be naturally led to conclude, that three Persons are three intelligent Agents, or active Substances ; but this will not do with our Author, and the difficulty is how to avoid it, which, I believe, every one must allow to be a little pinching. He will grant perhaps, that an Agent or Person, is an intelligent active Substance, because 'tis impossible to define a Person or Agent without including the Idea of Substance in it ; but then, he will say, that tho' one Agent is an active Substance, yet it will not follow, that three Agents are three active Substances ; which plainly amounts to this, that tho' it is granted, that one Agent is one Agent, yet it will not follow from hence, that three Agents are three Agents ; perhaps indeed one will not follow from the other, because they are both self-evident, that is as evident as the self-contradiction of our Author's Definition and Hypothesis. 'Tis plain, that the Substance itself is the Agent or Person, and therefore 'tis simply and

absolutely impossible to multiply the Persons or Agents, without multiplying the Substances. And from hence it is evident, that the distinction between essential and personal Properties is absurd and ridiculous ; for since the Person or Agent is nothing else but the active intelligent Substance itself, and since there is no other Subject of Properties but this one Substance, and consequently the Intelligence, active Power, and all other possible or conceivable Properties must subsist in this one Substance, as their proper Subject, or else subsist without any subject at all : 'tis plain that every essential Property must be a personal Property, and every personal Property an essential Property, without any difference or distinction. But since our Author talks in his Definition, and throughout his whole Book of personal incommunicable Properties, as the Characteristicks of the three distinct Persons, I would ask him what is the immediate subject of those incommunicable Properties? If he says the distinct Persons themselves, he then allows the Persons to be the proper sustaining Subjects of their own Attributes, that is, distinct Substances, which is *Tritheism*. But if this does not please him, he must place these personal Properties in the one common substance or essence, as their only proper sub-

subject, which must make them essential Attributes, and destroy the real distinction of Persons; and this is plainly *Sabellianism*, which is the same with *Socinianism*. It will be impossible in this way to suppose any diversity or multiplicity of Persons, without supposing at the same time, and in the very same sense, a like multiplicity and diversity of Essence; and I challenge this Author, or any of his abler and more learned Friends, to assign any possible meaning to their own Words, or tell us what they intend by three *real substantial Persons*, upon the Hypothesis of one individual Essence or numerical Identity of Substance. Perhaps the Author will be here ready to wonder at my Dulness, or Presumption, and ask whether he has not done this already; I say no, he has not done it, and I shall venture to tell him farther, that he cannot possibly do it. In this very Definition, he understands Person in two different and contrary Senses, even while he pretends to be fixing and ascertaining the determinate meaning of the Word. And this I shall now shew, which will let you into the whole Mystery. I do not mean into the *deep things* of God, but into the *deep things* of Mr. Pyke. Let us see then what he can possibly intend by three Persons in the *Divine Nature*, in the *Godhead*

n one and the same *Substance* or *Essence* ; for these he uses all along as equivalent Expressions.

When therefore he asserts three Persons in one, and the same Substance or Essence, if he should here keep to his own defin'd sense of the word Person, *viz.* an intelligent Agent, or intelligent active Substance ; by putting the Definition for the thing defin'd, what he says must amount to this ; that there are three intelligent active Substances, in one intelligent active Substance ; that is, three Persons and but one Person, three equally infinite and supreme Gods, and yet but one such ; which is so far from a Medium between *Sabellianism* and *Tritheism*, that 'tis jumbling them both together, and maintaining both parts of the Contradiction.

Here then his defin'd Sense of a Person which he declares for, will not do, and therefore he claps in his secret and reserv'd meaning, while he disclaims it. By person here therefore, when he says, there are three Persons in one and the same Essence, he can mean only three Modes of subsistence in the same Substance or Essence. And because there is no other subject of these Attributes or Modes, but the one Essence, in which they subsist, they must necessarily be essential Attributes ; and so there will be but one
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real substantial Person under three Modes or Attributes, which is direct and plain *Sabellianism* or *Socinianism*; and this opinion is indeed no contradiction in itself, tho' it be a contradiction to every thing else in Christianity. Thus, Sir, you see how our Author plays at fast and loose, how he shuffles in, or slips out the Idea of Substance, or Agent, in his account of *Person*, just as he thinks fit; nay, supposes two contrary senses to be both true at once, and so makes his Definition absolutely unintelligible and self-contradictory. And to shew that the Author is ever the same inconsistent Person with himself, I must desire you to observe the method he takes to disingage himself, *p.* 213, where he is press'd, among others, with this Contradiction, that if one and the self-same Substance or Essence be common to all the three persons, it must follow, that the same numerical Essence is begotten and unbegotten. Now what does he reply to this? Does he pretend that there is not a strict and absolutely Identity, or numerical sameness of Essence in the three Persons? Nothing like it, but he says, that it was not the *Essence*, but the *Person* of the Father, who begat the *Person* of the Son; and that the Substance or Essence is equally unoriginate and unbegotten in each Person alike; and this he was forc'd to say, because it is self-

self-evident, that the self-same individual Essence cannot possibly be begotten and unbegotten, derived and underived, communicated and not communicated at the same time. When therefore he tells us, that the *Person* of the Father begat the *Person* of the Son, he must either understand the word *Person* according to the *Sabellian* Sense in both places, and say, that the Father in begetting the Son did not act essentially, and that he did not beget a real substantial Son, but that only one Mode or Attribute begat another; or else he must include the Idea of Agent, or active Substance in the complex Idea express'd by the word *Person*, when apply'd to the Father as begetting, and leave it out when apply'd to the Son as begotten. He is at liberty to chuse either of these, as he likes best, since 'tis evident, that he must take one of them; but which way soever he turns himself, he can only by wriggling out of one contradiction, slip into another; and yet, which is very diverting, while he is only trifling with words, he talks of fighting, defeating and conquering, and seems overjoy'd in the conceit of a Victory.

Doctor *Waterland*, whom our Author always admires, and never understands, was so well aware, that *Substance* and *Person*, as used in this Argument, must be
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liable to the very same sort of Unity and Diversity ; that he expressly owns, that in a certain Sense, or rather *different Senses*, the three Persons are but one Person, and one Person three Persons. And in the same Sense, and by the same Necessity, had he dar'd speak out, he must have likewise own'd, that the one Substance is three Substances, and the one God three Gods. But tho' this double Intention may save the Doctor from *real Contradictions*, as to his secret reserv'd Meaning, where he seems to run into them in words, yet it can by no means save his Justice and Integrity in the Management of this Controversy. 'Tis upon this score the Doctor allows, that one may be three, and three one, when apply'd to Person, or Agent, but not so when apply'd to Substance, or God ; that he can allow of three Persons united into one person, but not of three Substances alike united into one Substance, or three Gods into one God ; and 'tis from hence he can grant, that there are three different, but not separate Persons, each of whom is God, and yet denies that there are three different, but not separate Gods. This seems a little hard and unequal, but there is a Mystery in it, which the Doctor could explain very well, had he a mind to it. It would be the easiest matter in the world

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to defend all that Dr. *Clark* has advanced concerning the Trinity, upon Dr. *Waterland's* own principles, but those who like a Man only because he seems to be orthodox, never trouble their Heads about the Meaning, provided his Words sound well; and 'tis for want of being let into the secret, that our Author has converted his Master's *seeming Contradictions* into real ones.

What has been said, may, I think, be sufficient to shew, that our Author's Happiness is only imaginary, and that he has had the ill luck to miscarry in his Attempt to fix a Medium between *Sabellianism* and *Tritheism*; under which mishap, however, he has this to comfort him, that he has done as much towards it, as other greater Men, *i. e.* just nothing at all.

The next grand principle upon which he builds his Fabrick is this, that the Man Christ born of the Virgin, or *Jesus of Nazareth* was not a human Person. By which, if he means any thing at all, I think it must be this, that the *Man Christ*, or *Jesus of Nazareth* was Man in general, but no Man in particular; that he had no real actual human Existence as distinct from the *Supreme God*; that he was only human Nature, or the general abstract Idea of Humanity, but no particular

cular real Man, or human Person actually subsisting.

But because I cannot possibly find out any meaning for him, but what must at once be Contradiction and Blasphemy, if he has himself any meaning to the word *Person*, as he applies it to the Incarnation and the *one Person* of our Saviour, I must here call upon him to produce it; and I cannot but think him under a plain indispensable Obligation to it, as he would from henceforth be reputed a Man of any Conscience, Integrity or Honour: for I must tell him, that to lay the whole weight of Christianity upon a thing of which he has not the least Notion or Conception, to use words of his own without any Meaning, under a pretence of the mysteriousness of Scripture, and to exclude from the Christian Covenant, and the Communion of Saints, all who will not join with him in the same unintelligible Sounds, is the most insufferable piece of Arrogance and Antichristian Zealotism. I could easily have forgiven our Author all the Absurdity and Contradiction in Nature, without calling him to any account for it, if he had not tack'd Christianity, and the Salvation of Mens Souls to it. But since he claims the Privileges of the Gospel, with an Exemption to all but himself and his own Party, and has

employ'd all his Artifice in working up and inflaming the Passions of the People, where he could not inform their Judgment; since he looks upon Moderation in this Point as a Crime, and has done his utmost yet farther to rend, distract, and divide the miserable Churches; I hope he will think himself concern'd to support what he has laid so vast a weight on, and that he will not, after the Example of some others, first discover his Presumption and Prejudice in writing about what he does not understand, and then his Cowardice and Treachery to the Souls of Men, in not defending what he takes to be of utmost Consequence.

And now, Sir, I have just done with our Author, only to make some amends for my not attending him farther; and that he may not think himself slighted, I here faithfully promise him in the Face of the World, that if he can fairly refute what has been offer'd, and defend his main Principles, which, I think, I have overthrown, I will frankly make him a Present of all the rest, and yield him the whole Cause. If he can do this, I have here confin'd him to a narrow Compass, and thereby sav'd him the trouble of writing a large Book, in a long labour'd preaching Harangue. But if he cannot support his Foundation, the Building
must

must fall of course. I doubt not however, but the other Gentlemen, with whom he is more particularly engag'd, will take care to rescue themselves from his *feeble Glosses*, in which he continually applies the foregoing false Principles, and never fails of begging the most material Parts of the Question. But since our Author pretends all along to be very clear, and that he does not use Words without a Meaning, let him in his next settle any one certain determinate Sense, to the words Communication, Generation, Procession, Divine Nature, Divine Essence, Godhead, undivided Substance; as he applies these Sounds to the Subject of the Trinity; as also to the words Nature, Person, Incarnation, Union, Humiliation, infinite Satisfaction, and the like, when he applies them to the mediatorial Capacity, Offices and Transactions of the Son of God. For what I charge upon him is this, that tho' those Terms have a fix'd determinate Sense in their common application and use, and he may not be ignorant of this their common Sense, yet when he comes to apply them to his *own Hypothesis*, he strips them of their *common* estabish'd *Meaning* without substituting any *other* in its stead, and uses them as mere empty Sounds, without any sense or meaning at all. If he does

not upon this Admonition and Charge, settle the determinate Meaning of those Words, as they must stand in his Hypothesis, I believe all the World must conclude, that his Insignificancy and beloved Darkness is necessary to something else besides the clearing of Truth, and informing the Judgment.

I had drawn up an Examination of Sir Richard Blackmore's just Prejudices against the *Arian* Hypothesis, with a Design of publishing it about four Months ago, but this farther occasion of writing happening in the mean while, I thought it altogether needless to trouble the publick with a particular Answer to a Book, which, as to its main Argument might fairly be overthrown in the compass of two or three pages.

I must here therefore observe to you, that this honourable and worthy Gentleman has thought fit to lay the whole stress of his Cause upon this Principle, *viz.* That the governing perfections of God, and his Truth and Fidelity in the Promises of the Gospel, cannot possibly be vindicated upon the Supposition, that the *Athanasian* Hypothesis, or modern Scheme of Orthodoxy is not true and agreeable to Scripture. A bold Assumption certainly this, and, I fear, a very rash and immature one: 'tis wonderful, that a
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Gentleman of so great Learning and Abilities, as every one must own Sir *Richard Blackmore* to be, should irrecoverably plunge himself at once beyond a possibility of defending the Perfections of God, or the Truth of the Christian Revelation, if he should happen to be mistaken about a particular scholastick Hypothesis, which he owns to be incomprehensible. His general Argument is this, that if the Christian Church has been mistaken for at least these 1400 Years, about a Point of such Importance, it must hence follow, that the Promises of the Gospel relating to the Stability and perpetual Establishment of the Church of Christ upon Earth to the End of Time, have not been in Fact fulfill'd; on which Supposition it will, as the learned Author concludes, be impossible to vindicate the divine Perfections, and the Truth of Christianity. But I must desire you to take notice, that this learned Gentleman in the management of his Argument, assumes several things as *postulata*, without Proofs, which no Adversary will grant him.

1st. He supposes, that the Point now in Debate, is a Fundamental or Essential to Christianity, and that one side or other in the present Controversy, must be guilty of Heresy or damnable Error. This he assumes

assumes as granted, and contents himself with barely asserting it in strong and positive Terms, without taking the least notice of many things which had been offer'd with great appearance of Reason to the contrary. And therefore 'till the learned Author shall be pleas'd to produce his Evidence, I shall here make very short with him, and content myself with as flatly denying it.

2dly. This very learned, and in other respects justly celebrated Author, assumes it as a thing granted, that the Christian Church, *i. e.* the Gross of those who outwardly and visibly profess Christianity, have, for at least, these 1400 Years, been agreed in this Point, in Sense as well as Sound; and that the Doctrine they have unanimously receiv'd, has been no other than what is now contended for. But I am very well perswaded, that the Proof of this would give the learned Author a great deal of Trouble, and therefore it was prudently done of him to decline it. For if it be consider'd what vast Numbers in the Christian World there are, and always have been, who have never troubled themselves at all about this Matter, so much as to understand the Meaning of the very Words and Terms in which their several Creeds and Confessions have been conceiv'd and express'd, and who therefore

fore can be supposed, at most, only to agree in the sound of words, without meaning; and if it be likewise consider'd, that even the learned Men themselves, who have thought it incumbent on them to settle the Faith and Worship of the Christian World, when they come to examine things, have ever given such different and contrary Explications, and divided into such opposite Parties, each hereticating and condemning the others, that they cannot possibly be suppos'd to mean the same thing; and that the learned Contenders for what is esteem'd Orthodoxy at this very day, are apparently as much divided among themselves, as they are from those whom they now call *Arians*; if these things are consider'd, I say, it must appear, that there never has been any real Harmony or Agreement at all among the Christian Churches in this Point, arising from any rational Perswasion, after a free impartial Enquiry, and without which, any other seeming Harmony and Agreement in words only, can be of no Moment at all in Matters of Religion. The learned Author therefore had no reason to take this for granted, unless he thinks it a Mark of their religious Harmony and Agreement, that they plainly appear for many Ages together, not at all to have consider'd or examin'd the Matter.

3dly,

3^{dly}, This learned Gentleman takes it for granted, that the Promises of the Gospel concerning the stability and preservation of the Church, relate not to the true Catholick invisible Church, but to the outward visible Church, or the gross of those, who make an external visible profession of Christianity. And his mistake here must have overthrown his Argument, even tho' he could have prov'd the Fundamentality of the Point in Debate, and the general Consent of the visible Church for 1400 Years; both which he yet assumes without Proof.

I hope this honourable and worthy Gentleman does not think, that the promises of the Gospel which relate to the preservation of the Church, are contrary to, and inconsistent with those predictions and prophecies of the same Gospel, which plainly foretel, that general grand Apostacy from the Christian Faith and Practice under the Antichristian State, and which accordingly grew and prevail'd, 'till it had settled and spread itself over the whole Christian World for many Ages together. Now had this Antichristian Apostacy been more universal, and of much longer Continuance, had it lasted, not only 1400, but even 14000 Years, yet still I conceive, while a certain Number more or less of sincere persons, and faithful

ful Disciples of Christ had been reserv'd in the World, however scatter'd up and down, and, as it were, lost in the general Corruption for a Time, the perfections of God and the Truth of his promises must stand secure. And if this learned Author thinks otherwise, I doubt he will find it an hard matter, and even impossible, upon his own principles, to defend either natural Religion against an Atheist, or Christianity against a Deist, whatever should become of the particular point now in Debate. Since therefore this learned Author has plainly mistaken the Notion of the *Church* in reference to the *Gospel Promises*; since the real general Consent which he talks of, is only supposed without proof; and since he has not prov'd, and, I believe, cannot prove, the Fundamentality of this Article with regard to the different Sentiments of those, who now dispute about it; I cannot but think that he has grounded all his prejudices, and even the perfections of God, and the Truth of Christianity upon a very slight and sandy Foundation. In consequence of which, I think it must plainly rest upon this learned and worthy Gentleman, either to retract what he has written, or explain himself farther, and support his Scheme with much stronger Evidence.

ably, As to what the learned Author has offer'd concerning the dependance of Articles of Faith upon Consequences, I hope he will forgive me the Presumption of saying (what is most certainly true) that he has quite mistaken the Question, and by proving too much, has prov'd nothing at all to the real Purpose. He observes that all Propositions which are not self-evident, must depend some way or other upon rational Inferences and Deductions; which is very true, but 'tis what no one person in the World, that I know of, has ever deny'd; and so this worthy Gentleman may be perfectly easy, at least in this respect, as having no Adversary. Consequences in this Debate, had never before been oppos'd to *self-evident* Propositions, but to *express Declarations* in Matters of pure Revelation, or Testimony, where the Divine Authority of Scripture is supposed to be received and own'd on both sides, as a common Principle, upon antecedent Proofs. The Question therefore is this, whether any thing ought to be made necessary to Salvation and Christian Communion, that the Holy Ghost in Scripture has not clearly, expressly, and definitively declared as such. And with me, who have carried the matter a little farther, the Question

tion also is, whether independent Facts are capable of yielding any such Consequences, and whether this act of the mind in drawing rational Inferences and Deductions must not be confin'd to Principles of Reason and Science, as distinct from Matters of Fact and Testimony. 'Tis here then, that the learned Author, if he would talk to the purpose, ought to shew his Strength. Let him prove that every thing necessary to Salvation is not clearly and expressly determined by the Holy Ghost in Scripture, but that some such Matters are left to the consequential Determination of fallible Men in after Ages, according to the different scholastick Systems which might happen to prevail. Nay, let him prove it so much as possible in the nature of the thing to carry any Matter of *pure* Revelation beyond the express Sense and Import of the Revelation *itself*, as abstracted from all *really* distinct Consequences *whatever*. What the learned Author can offer upon this, as it will be directly to the Purpose, so it shall be impartially and candidly consider'd, and reply'd to.

Thus, my dear and ever faithful Friend,
I have endeavour'd briefly and clearly, as
I could, to answer the Design of your
E 2 Letter,

Letter, and I hope you will like it never
the worse, as coming to you in this
way.

I am,

Sir,

your sincere Friend,

and humble Servant,

T. M.

Marlborough,

Nov. 16.

1721.



THE



THE
POSTSCRIPT

Concerning

*The real Agreement between
the Athanasians and Soci-
nians, in the Trinitarian
Controversy.*



HE many unhappy Dif-
ferences and sharp Con-
tentions among Chri-
stians, which rend and
divide the Church, and
keep the Cause of Re-
ligion continually blee-
ding ; are, and ever have been, by the
Confession of all, raised and maintained
for defence of *Truth*. Every Man who
pretends to be of any Religion, and thinks
himself capable of handling an Argument,
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is ready to declare his passionate Concern for *Truth*, and that he seeks it with the utmost Impartiality. But the great Contest is, Who has *this Treasure* in possession? Where it is to be found? And to what Party it of Right belongs? It is evidently impossible to settle this point of Right upon the foot of any separate divided Property; because all parties are ready to take up Arms in their own Defence, and the Matter is incapable of any human Reference. For whoever should assign the Property to any one Party in particular, must needs displease all the rest, and provoke them to Revenge the Injury. And there is no hopes, that a Proposal of sharing the Prize betwixt them would ever be accepted, since every one seems resolv'd to have all or none. One would wish indeed, that the Matter for the present might, at least, peaceably rest here; that Christians would put themselves out of a State of War, and agree to refer the Decision of the point to the last Day. For since they cannot determine it among themselves, why should they not in Equity leave it to God to decide betwixt them. But because this, how reasonable soever, is not, I fear, likely to be obtain'd, I can think but of one Expedient more with any probability of Success for reconciling the

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Parties at Variance; and that is, by making it appear, that they are really agreed; that they have no different Notions or Ideas of the things themselves, which they contend about, but differ only about Words, and the manner of Expression. And, methinks, Men should not willingly contend for nothing, if they knew it to be nothing that they contend for, at least those, who would still fight for *Air*, and only to keep themselves in *Breath*, could have no pretence of contending for the *Truth*.

I do not think it an impossible thing to shews that the most famous and troublesome Controversies which have divided and distracted the Church, and put the Christian World into a State of War, have been only about *Names*, and the Right of *Christning things*, while the opposite and contending parties have had all the same Notions and Ideas of the *things themselves*. But I shall confine myself here to the proper Subject of this *Postscript*, with regard to the real Consent and Agreement between the *Athanasians* and *Socinians*; which must be allow'd to be a famous and pregnant instance enough; since perhaps, there never was any Contention in the Christian Church, among those at least, who have profess'd the same Rule of Faith; where the opposite Parties have more heartily contradicted

dicted each other, or seem'd to be at a wider distance. The *Athanasians* constantly asserting in the strongest Terms, three persons in the one Essence, or Substance of God, which the *Socinians* reject and ridicule. The *Socinians* also flatly denying the Supreme Deity or Godhead of Jesus Christ, which the *Athanasians* as flatly maintain. Upon this account the *Socinians* have ever represented their Adversaries as Fools, or Madmen; and these again, to be thoroughly reveng'd, have given the others to the Devil. But notwithstanding this verbal Contradiction and Repugnancy of Sounds, I shall now shew, that they are both agreed in *Sense* so far, as either the one or the other have any real Notion or Conception of the thing; that the *Socinians* never did deny the Godhead of Christ, or the Trinity of *Persons* in the *Athanasian* Sense; and on the other hand, that the *Athanasians* themselves do and must deny the Godhead of Christ and a Trinity of *Persons* in the *Socinian* Sense. And consequently, that it is not the *same thing*, but very *different things*, which the one affirm, and the other deny; and so that the point of Difference is not in *Sense*, but in *Sound* only.

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The seeming Difference in reference to the Trinity lies in this, that the *Socinians* affirm the *one God* to be but *one Person*, whereas the *Athanasians* maintain, that he is *three Persons*. But this Contradiction is merely verbal, arising only from the different Sense of the Word *Person*, which in the *Socinian* Sense stands for an intelligent Agent, or intelligent active Substance, and consequently three Persons must, according to them, be three intelligent active Substances. And 'tis in this Sense only, that they deny three Persons in the one God. And do not all the *Athanasians* with one Voice deny three Persons also in this Sense, as much as their Adversaries?

On the other hand, the *Athanasians* as they declare, by a *Person*, mean a different, or really distinct Mode of Subsistence in the same Substance, or Essence, *i. e.* the Substance or Essence itself, as thus, or thus modify'd, and differently subsisting under a certain Characteristical manner, which they call personal. And no *Socinian*, or any Man else in his Senses ever deny'd the possibility or Truth of three persons in one and the same Substance, or three persons and one God in this Sense. The *Socinians*

cinians have ever declared, that the *Logos*, i. e. according to them, the Essential Word, Reason or Wisdom of God, is God himself, or the Divine Essence, as thus modify'd, or subsisting in such a particular manner, and that this is the Case with respect to any other Essential Attribute in God. And what if a *Socinian* calls that an *Essential Attribute*, which an *Athanasian* calls a *Person*, while the thing is evidently the same in Sense, and they agree in one common Definition, where is the Harm? And however therefore our learned *Athanasians* may affect to keep up a certain unintelligible *Medium*, whenever they shall think fit to speak out their Minds clearly in this Case, I dare be accountable for it, that either they will agree with *Socinians*, or not differ from *Tritheists*,

The other verbal Contradiction between the *Athanasians* and *Socinians* is this, that the one affirm, and the other deny the Supreme Deity or Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This indeed looks like a very startling Difference in *Words*, and is the very thing by which many in this Controversy affright and terrify the common People; who having their Passions

sions deeply preingaged, and being struck with Horror at the very *Sound*, are incapable of considering the Matter, and attending to the real State of the Case, and so run away in a sort of Phrenzy, crying out eternal Vengeance and Damnation ! Now, notwithstanding this senseless and uncharitable Clamour, that there is no possible conceivable Difference between the *Athanasians* and *Socinians* in this Matter, will sufficiently appear, if we consider what both Parties say in the Case, how far they agree, and wherein they can be supposed to differ. The great and startling Charge, as I have observ'd, is, that the *Socinians*, and indeed the *Arians*, and *Eusebians* too deny the strict and proper, *i. e.* the Supreme Deity of Christ.

But I shall now shew, that the *Socinians*, and the other Parties here refer'd to, do not, and never did deny the Supreme Deity or Godhead of Christ under any Sense in which it is affirmed by the *Athanasians*; and that the *Athanasians* themselves, do and must deny it likewise in the Sense that 'tis deny'd by the *Socinians*: And consequently, that it is not the *same thing* that is affirmed by one Party, and deny'd by the other, but quite *different things*

things, which are equally, either affirmed or deny'd by all Parties alike. And this seeming wide Difference, where there is none in reality, arises from the different use of Words in the Babel of Languages. From hence it comes about, that what in the *Socinian* Sense, (and indeed the common Sense of Mankind about all other Matters) is two distinct and different *Persons*; is in the *Athanasian* Sense, if any such Sense there be, but one and the *same Person*. But let the different Meaning of the Word *Person*, as it is used in this part of the Argument by the opposite Parties, be once clearly settled, and both Sides will soon appear to be of the same Mind about the things themselves; and the remaining Difference will be only in Words. The *Socinians* by a *Person*, mean an intelligent Agent, or intelligent active Substance, and therefore God subsisting under the Character of his Essential Word, Reason, or Wisdom, must with them be a distinct and different Person from the Man, Christ, or Jesus of *Nazareth*. And from hence, when they deny the Supreme Deity of Christ, they mean no more than this, that the Man Christ was not the same Agent, the same intelligent active Substance with
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the Supreme God; and since the affirming of this would be the grossest Contradiction, as well as downright Blasphemy; the *Athanasians* must necessarily deny it as well as the *Socinians*, that is, they must deny Christ to be the Supreme God, or the same Person with God, in the same Sense that the *Socinians* do; and must necessarily allow, that in the *Socinian* Sense, they are two distinct and infinitely different Persons.

Thus far then the *Athanasians* must unavoidably agree with the *Socinians*. And here I must call upon all the Learned *Athanasians* of this Age, to make it appear, that the *Socinians*, *Arians*, *Eusebians*, or any other Party among Christians, ever deny'd the Personal Union of the Supreme God with the Man Christ Jesus, under any Sense, in which they themselves can possibly conceive or affirm it. Let them do this, or, for shame, be silent, and not make a Noise and Out-cry in the World against others, as if they wanted something Essential to Christianity, while they are not able to fix any intelligible Point of Difference.

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